DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 183 SP 009 960

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TITLE Model for Developing an In-Service Teacher Workshop To Help Multilingual and Multicultural Students.
PUB DATE [75]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Pluralism; English (Second Language); *Inservice Teacher Education; *Models; *Program Development; *Teacher Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Multicultural Education

ABSTRACT

This is a model for designing an inservice teacher workshop to assist teachers working with multicultural students. The basic assumption underlying the model is universities and schools need to work cooperatively to provide experiences for improving the quality of teaching by increasing awareness of educational issues and situations and by introducing innovations in approaches and techniques substantiated by research. The design model developed consisted of three major components: (1) identification of needs, (2) planning and organization of experiences and resources, and (3) evaluation. After the needs were identified, the workshop was organized into five phases: (1) an introductory session; (2) a simulation to involve participants; (3) a session highlighting techniques to use with students acquiring English as a second language; (4) small group discussions and debriefing sessions; and (5) the presentation of filmstrips, videotapes, and films related to the theme of the workshop. Evaluation indicated that the design of the workshop did help the participants to deal more effectively with the challenge of teaching in a multicultural, multilingual society. (DMT)

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MODEL FOR DEVELOPING AN IN-SERVICE TEACHER WORKSHOP TO HELP MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL STUDENTS

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MODEL FOR DEVELOPING AN IN-SERVICE TEACHER WORKSHOP TO HELP MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL STUDENTS

Today, most Americans regard immigration as historical phenomena. An immigration law adopted in 1965 has encouraged more immigration to this country during the past ten years than at any other time since the major migration between 1880 and 1924.[1] Immigration to this country between 1960 and 1970 accounted for 16% of our annual population growth; it was responsible for 18% of our growth in 1971, and by 1972 it had increased to 23%.[2]

Dearborn is a suburb of Detroit, a continuation of the urban sprawl. It shares with the metropolitan complex many of the problems and concerns which beset such areas. One of them is the growing number of immigrants and refugees who must be absorbed into the mainstream. These immigrants and refugees come from various geographical regions, depending upon the current international political and economic tensions and events. They have settled in many different urban communities throughout our country and, especially, in industrialized urban centers such as Detroit. Before the 1940's, the southeastern section of Dearborn, sometimes referred to as "Little Europe," had approximately five thousand individuals, of whom over half were of Arabic cultural descent.[3] Since World War II the Arabic population has been

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[1]Susan Jacoby, "Dream Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, February 23, 1975, p. 11.

[2]Leslie Aldridge Westoff, "Should We Pull Up the Gangplank," The New York Times Magazine, September 16, 1973, p. 15.

[3]Barbara C. Aswad, Editor, Arabic Speaking Communities in American Cities (New York: Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc. and the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1974), pp. 53-79.

growing even larger. Today Arabic and European immigrant families are not only residing in the "southend" of Dearborn but many of them are locating in other nearby communities within Dearborn and in neighborhoods contiguous to Dearborn.

The greatest numbers of elementary and secondary level students in Dearborn are from the Middle East although there are immigrants from other European countries. A tremendous responsibility is delegated to the schools in terms of acculturation and bringing to realization the immigrant's dream for a good education and a good job. The hope is that this can be accomplished without destroying the individual's self-concept and identity. Cultural pluralism, after all, is the basis upon which our country has built and expanded the democratic ideal committed to improving the quality of life for all. The immigrant, therefore, must not be forced to reject and turn away from what he is.

In an initial conversation with the Coordinator of Academic Education, in Dearborn, it was determined that the greatest need often expressed by teachers was for help in working with multilingual and multicultural students, preschool through the twelfth grade. With the ultimate objective, then, to improve some aspect of this teaching/learning situation, a workshop for teachers was planned by the Division of Urban Education, the University of Michigan-Dearborn with the support and assistance from the Dearborn Public Schools.

The design model used in planning and organizing this in-service workshop for teachers, "Working with Multilingual and Multicultural Students, Preschool - 12," consisted of three major components:

I. Identification of Needs

II. Planning and Organization of Experiences and Resources

III. Evaluation

The initiatory step involved the identification and articulation of the concern and need itself. The next phase involved the actual planning and organization of the workshop program. This included the development of the basic format which emphasized the concerns articulated in the first step. The last component of the model involved the evaluation of the workshop in terms of the objectives determined during the first two steps. The basic assumption underlying the entire project was that the universities and the schools need to work cooperatively to provide experiences for improving the quality of teaching by increasing awareness of educational issues and situations and by introducing innovations in approaches and techniques substantiated by research and study.

I. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

In beginning the first component in the model, arrangements were made for the University Coordinator to meet with a number of teachers, students, and administrators representing different grade levels and different school communities within Dearborn to discuss the possibility of a workshop focusing on students learning English as a second language. The workshop would be held at the University of Michigan-Dearborn Fair Lane Conference Center in the spring, 1975. Two such meetings were held; one during school hours and another after school with essentially the same teachers, students, and administrators. Other meetings were also held with the administrators to review the suggestions and recommendations and to

consider the feasibility of the recommendations and proposals as to financial support and availability of resource persons.

Both of the larger meetings were extremely interesting and helpful in identifying the specific concerns and interests of the students and the teachers. The students invited to participate in the initial meetings were shy and rather self-conscious; yet, they, too, were exceedingly helpful in trying to communicate their problems in adjusting to a new country and a new school and new friends. The teachers were especially interested in the comments and statements made by the students. It appeared at the outset that teachers wanted more and needed more information about the students' cultural background, their style of living. Some of the students in the schools spoke English well, others comprehended very little of the spoken English. A few even spoke French fluently. The problems of human relationships were discussed as they related to the Arabic students making an adjustment to the new country. The students appeared to feel alienated; they felt they needed more individual help in learning the new language.

The teachers expressed again and again the idea that they wanted something very specific in strategies and methodologies; something they could take back and use the very next day in the classroom as they worked with students learning English as a second language. A question that was repeated many times was, "What do we do first with these students?" The immediate challenge was to translate as many of these concerns as possible into a one-day workshop for the teachers.

II. PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION OF EXPERIENCES AND RESOURCES

After the two meetings with the Dearborn teachers, students and administrators, an outline was submitted to the Coordinator of Academic

Education for his consideration which attempted to interpret and incorporate the needs and interests of the teachers, students and administrators. Since Dearborn's major influx of new students was predominantly of Arabic cultural origin, it was decided to focus on the Arabic student specifically and to present him as a case study with the thought that the basic strategies and the suggestions would be transferable to any similar situation. Also, it was decided at that time that very specific strategies and techniques would be presented to teachers which they might be able to use in their classrooms in teaching English as a second language.

For the one-day workshop, five phases for Component II were identified and planned as fulfilling the needs and concerns expressed in the meetings. These five phases were then further elaborated as to type of activity, time allotment, resource individuals, and degree of involvement for participants.

Phase One served as an introductory session as well as an informative one. The focus was a panel discussion entitled, "A Case Study: The Arabic Student." An anthropologist from Wayne State University who had done a tremendous amount of work with the Arabic population in Dearborn, and a student of Arabic descent from the University of Michigan-Dearborn, shared the responsibilites of leadership for the panel discussion. They met several times and discussed the purpose and organization of the panel. As a result of these conversations, it was decided to invite a linguist from Wayne State University who had done research on Arab child bilinguals, two secondary school students, and a paraprofessional, parent and community representative, who was currently working with Arab children at the elementary level to participate in the panel discussion. All of these individuals were of Arabic descent. They addressed themselves to questions such as:

Who are these students?

Where do they come from?

Why have they come?

What changes must they make in their style of living?

What problems result as they are altering their style of living?

What kinds of language problems do they have? Why?

How can the schools help in making this transition a stimulating and productive one?

The second phase was planned for total involvement of the participants. A simulation, BaFaBaFa, A Cross Culture Simulation, was to be used to acquaint the participants with the many problems confronting students in a new and different environment. Because of the number of participants, modifications in the original simulation were made and "new cultures" created. As the participants became involved in the simulation, they began to experience feelings which are similar to those which are encountered when one travels to a different country and culture. Participants became sensitized to the psychological barriers and blocks that develop while attempting to adjust in a different society and in learning a new language for basic communication. New customs had to be learned quickly in order not to feel "different" and "queer."

After the simulation experience, a leisurely luncheon was served in the Fair Lane Center for the purpose of providing the presenters and the participants with ample opportunity to discuss common concerns and problems. Comments related to the panel discussion and feelings experienced during the simulation were often the topic of conversation.

The third phase highlighted the techniques and strategies which one could use in working with students acquiring English as a second language.

Four resource people representing The University of Michigan-Dearborn, Wayne State University, and the Oakland County Intermediate School District shared the leadership for this session. These individuals were selected to contribute to this phase because of their expertise in their fields of reading and linguistics as well as their actual experiences in working with multilingual children from the preschool through the University level. They were asked to organize their presentation in such a way that techniques and strategies would be available to teachers and could be used by them. The purposes of their presentation were to identify those practices which assist teachers in:

A. Learning as much as possible about the student and his heritage,

B. Planning experiences for second language learning, and

C. Facilitating the reading process for these students.

Products illustrating some of the strategies and techniques were brought from the schools and were displayed for the participants. Also, two University of Michigan-Dearborn students had developed a bibliography and display of books on and about minority groups.

Phase Four involved small group discussions and debriefing sessions. Each of the presenters had agreed to conduct one such session. They had been invited to remain the entire day -- making their own presentations, eating lunch with the participants, participating in the simulation, and listening to other presenters. The participants were divided into random groups and each of the presenters was assigned to a group. Teachers, students, and administrators were encouraged to ask questions and to make comments about any of the ideas which were presented during the day. This was an informal, flexible type of discussion. It was interesting to note that some of these

discussions continued for at least one hour after the formal closing of the one-day workshop.

The last phase involved the presentation of filmstrips, video tapes, and films related to the theme of the workshop. The participants were invited to stay and view the materials if they wished. There was no attempt to reconvene the entire group for such viewing.

III. EVALUATION

The purpose of Component III - Evaluation was to measure the overall effectiveness of the workshop. To that end, a questionnaire was designed and mailed to all participants except the University students. Of the 75 questionnaires mailed, 30 were completed and returned. In addition to the informational data regarding the workshop, the replies also assisted in identifying various group characteristics. A description of the professional roles of the participants who responded to the questionnaire follows:

Role of Participant	Percentage Responding
Elementary school teacher	36-2/3
Secondary school teacher	23-1/3
School administrator	13-1/3
Student teacher	6-2/3
University teacher	3-1/3
Public librarian	3-1/3
Consultant	3-1/3
Volunteer in ESL (English as a Second Language) program	3-1/3
Teacher - Adult Education	3-1/3
No identification	3-1/3

These percentages by and large also reflect the general attendance pattern at the workshop -- with the elementary and secondary school teachers comprising more than one-half of the participants.

It was not surprising in analyzing the general information from the questionnaires that the largest percentage of participants represented school systems from the satellite cities surrounding Detroit. As was mentioned earlier, large waves of immigrants have recently been establishing themselves in these areas and the workshop was clearly intended to be of service to the teachers in these systems. The following data reflects attendance by systems:

School System Represented	Percentage
Satellite Cities	76-2/3
Detroit	10
University	10
Public Library	3-1/3

It should be noted that the largest number of brochures was mailed to the systems surrounding Detroit. However, coverage by the media regarding the workshop extended to the entire metropolitan area.

The questionnaire itself was simple in design. Participants were asked to respond to these questions: What new information or new insights did you gain from attending the conference? Was there a specific change in your own behavior or in your own attitudes? Were you able to put any of the suggestions to practice? A block of space was also reserved for any other comments. It was anticipated that replies to these questions would indicate the degree to which the workshop was able to: (1) raise the awareness level of the participants regarding the Arabic community, its culture, and its problems, and (2) assist in a very practical way by providing the participants with teaching strategies and techniques that could be of immediate use. The statements made by the respondents were categorized on this basis and tallied.

There were 31 separate statements recorded by participants which reflected a gain in insight or knowledge regarding the Arabic immigrants, their culture, and their problems. Some statements were general:

"There is a change in my attitude."

"I feel I will now have more understanding..."

Other statements were more specific:

"...(I learned of) the sense of closeness of such communities."

"The attitude of the students on the panel was not exactly what I thought it would be -- their self-image was so poor -- their feelings that the school was not providing enough."

"...especially interesting was to hear how estranged some of the students felt..."

Such expressions were considered positive indicators that a workshop of this design could, indeed, lead participants to acknowledge the perceptions and the feelings of a minority group.

Statements recorded by participants which indicated the practical value of the workshop were numerous. Sixty-five such statements were tallied. Some of the general comments were:

"...(learned) some newer teaching techniques in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)..."

"...(learned of) different ideas and methods for teaching..."

The other statements were quite specific:

"I have tried letting reading errors go by without correction if it seems not to affect the main idea."

"The procedure of assisted reading and dictation were of great interest to me."

"...the identification of specific sounds which are difficult for Arabic students was useful."

"...the importance of the language experience approach to reading."

"...suggestion of letting risks be taken in reading and not helping children with every word."

It was obvious in examining these comments that the majority of the participants did receive the kind of practical information which could be tried and tested in classrooms the next day.

It should be noted tnat for a few participants the workshop reinforced what they already knew and were practicing. For one participant, the workshop provided scientific support for what was intuitive up to this point.

Because the workshop was attended by several administrators, consultants, and specialists, some attention was focused on their replies. These participants were all positive in their replies and there was evidence that the workshop was informative and useful in a special way for them as revealed in these comments:

"...will use input to look at structuring of bilingual education recommendations to meet provisions of state law."

"Shared my report with other appropriate administrators."

"I've already set up a workshop and will use some of the consultants I met at the multilingual workshop."

Of the 30 replies, only three were negative in tone -- two from elementary school teachers and one from a secondary school teacher. Generally, the negative comments indicated an irritation with having to deal with yet another minority group. The only positive note was a minor acknowledgment on two of these replies that some of the practical suggestions were worthwhile.

There was an attempt to involve as many of the students at the University in the one-day workshop as possible. Some of them helped in registration, monitoring and directing the simulation, and showing visual materials, and displaying products. Also, University students were permitted and encouraged to attend whenever they had time from their regular schedule of classes.

The registration costs and luncheon price were kept at a minimum. The Dearborn Coordinator of Academic Education committed 30 of his teachers to the workshop and the time and date were mutually agreed upon. There were many more who wished to come; however, the availability of so many substitutes presented a problem to the school system. Announcements of the workshop were then sent to a few of the school systems in the metropolitan Detroit area. The response was very surprising, which, of course, indicated that the challenge of working with multicultural students was of major concern to professionals in the metropolitan area.

In summary, the data seems to indicate that the design of the workshop did help the participants to deal more effectively with the challenge of teaching in a multilingual, multicultural society.